

Clinical Tidbits

...for Physicians

January 2014

Secondhand Smoke Linked to Hearing Loss in Children

A brand new study shows passive smoking in childhood correlates with the presence of sensorineural hearing loss, particularly so in those children who experience “heavy exposure” to secondhand smoke.

Smoking has many known negative effects, particularly, on the development of serious vascular and respiratory diseases. It has been reported that exposure to secondhand smoke increases risk for *conductive* hearing loss in children from middle ear infections with effusion, and *sensorineural* hearing loss in adolescents. However, the connection between smoking and *sensorineural* hearing loss in children has not been fully explored.

A new study, which appeared in the International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology this month, found a connection between childhood exposure to secondhand smoke and sensorineural hearing loss. The study examined 411 children aged 5-11 years old. Children were separated into “no exposure”, “mild exposure” (father was only smoking parent and prohibited to smoke in the home), and “heavy exposure” (mother smoked, or the father smoked freely in the home in the presence of the children). The prevalence of hearing loss was 3.8%, 4.5%, and 12% in the groups respectively, with a significant difference being detected between the “heavy exposure” group and the other two.

Does passive smoking induce sensorineural hearing loss in children? Talaat HS, Metwaly MA, Khafagy AH, Abdelraouf HR. Int J Pediatr Otorhinolaryngol. 2014 Jan;78(1):46-9. doi: 10.1016/j.ijporl.2013.10.016. Epub 2013 Oct 30.



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